

Kearns Block  
S-17 Bridge Street  
Manchester  
Hillsborough County  
New Hampshire

HABS No. NH-200

HABS  
NH  
6-MANCH,  
7-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HABS  
NH,  
6-MANC  
7-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

KEARNS BLOCK

HABS No. NH-200

Location: 15-17 Bridge Street, Manchester, Hillsborough County,  
New Hampshire

USGS Manchester South Quadrangle, Universal Transverse  
Mercator Coordinates: Zone 19 Easting 299230  
Northing 4763030

Present Owner: Manchester Housing Authority  
198 Hanover Street  
Manchester, New Hampshire

Previous Occupant/  
Use: Salty Dog Tavern. The building was demolished on  
June 1, 1985.

Significance: The Kearns Block, a four-story brick structure, was built in 1895 for saloon keeper/restaurateur Patrick Kearns on Bridge Street near its intersection with Elm Street, Manchester's principal commercial thoroughfare. The building was within walking distance of the mills of the city's major employer, the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, the world's largest cotton textile producer in the early twentieth century. The brick block replaced a frame structure in which former mill worker Kearns lived and operated a saloon, and was built to combine commercial use on the first story with residential apartments on the three upper stories. It typifies the material success of Kearns and is modestly significant as a common example of mixed-use construction in thriving, late nineteenth-century downtown Manchester. City directories from 1916 through the late 1970s show the names of the apartment occupants to be predominantly of French origin, reflecting the large population of French-Canadian workers attracted to Manchester's textile mills during the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

The Kearns Block was determined to be individually eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places on July 17, 1979 (Criterion C). The vernacular architectural vocabulary of the Kearns Block is an awkward composite, but the building is given presence by its solidity of construction and spare Romanesque Revival detailing and enrichment.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1895. The January 1896 Manchester Board of Trade Journal, p. 19, lists a "brick block for Patrick Kearns on Bridge Street" among work completed by builder J. H. Mendell and Co.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: References to the chain of title to the land upon which the structure stands are in the office of the Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds and Probate Records, 19 Temple Street, Nashua, New Hampshire.

Legal description: A certain lot or parcel of land with the buildings thereon, situated in said Manchester, bounded and described as follows, to wit:

Beginning at the southeasterly corner of the premises at a point in the westerly line of Church Street fifty-four and five-tenths (54.5) feet southerly from Bridge Street; thence, westerly parallel with said Bridge Street, sixty (60) feet, more or less, to land now or formerly of Grace W. Johnson; thence, northerly parallel with said Church Street, fifty-four and five-tenths (54.5) feet to Bridge Street; thence, easterly by said Bridge Street to Church Street; thence, southerly by Church Street, fifty-four and five-tenths (54.5) feet to the point of beginning; being the same premises conveyed to Acorn Investment Company by deed of Elizabeth J. Kearns, dated April 4, 1945, and recorded in Vol. 1078, page 246, Hillsborough Records.

1879 Deed, October 14, 1879, recorded in Volume 451, page 143.

Alpheus D. Burgess

To

Patrick and Ellen Kearns.

1903 Deed, February 27, 1903, recorded in Volume 617, page 483.

Dennis F. Lane, guardian of Michael F. Larkin

To

Patrick and Ellen Kearns.

1903 Deed, February 27, 1903, recorded in Volume 617, page 538.

William H. Lane

To

Patrick and Ellen Kearns.

1903 Deed, October 1, 1903, recorded in Volume 621, page 142.

Patrick Kearns

To

Ellen Kearns.

- 1913 Probate Docket #28792, filed August 13, 1913:  
Estate of Ellen Kearns  
To  
Mary E. Foley; Elizabeth J. Kearns, Thomas J. Kearns,  
Francis J. Kearns.
- 1915 Deed, April 2, 1915, recorded in Volume 730, page 129.  
Mary E. Foley and Thomas J. Kearns  
To  
Elizabeth J. Kearns and Francis J. Kearns.
- 1937 Probate Docket #51717, January, 1937.  
Estate of Francis J. Kearns  
To  
Elizabeth J. Kearns.
- 1942 Deed, February 11, 1942, recorded in Volume 1030, page 192.  
Elizabeth J. Kearns.  
To  
James A. Ferretti, Victor J. Ferretti, and Arthur A. Ferretti.
- 1945 Deed, May 1, 1945, recorded in Volume 1078, page 246.  
Elizabeth J. Kearns  
To  
Acorn Investment Company.
- 1945 Deed, October 31, 1945, recorded in Volume 1093, page 127.  
James A. Ferretti, Victor J. Ferretti, and Arthur A. Ferretti  
To  
Acorn Investment Company.
- 1964 Deed, May 18, 1964, recorded in Volume 1780, page 174.  
Acorn Investment Company  
To  
Filbert Associates, Incorporated.
- 1984 Declaration of Taking, September 20, 1984, recorded in  
Volume 3213, pages 569-576.  
Manchester Housing Authority vs. 1.6 +/- Acres of Land in  
Washington Street Project Redevelopment Plan, Manchester,  
New Hampshire.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: James H. Mendell was the building contractor. (Manchester Board of Trade Journal, January, 1896, p. 19) No information about suppliers was located. Mendell started as a carpenter in Manchester in 1893. In 1895 he first advertised himself in the city directory as a contractor and builder, and continued as such through 1912. (In 1896 Mendell won the contract to build the Chateausque mansion for George E. Gould on North Elm Street (Manchester Board of Trade Journal, January, 1896, p. 19) which is now the Notre Dame College administration building.

5. Original plans and construction: No description, plans or early views of the Kearns Block were located. Flynn's 1896 Atlas of the City of Manchester, New Hampshire, plate 5, shows the building's original footprint prior to construction of the present one-story ell at the southeast corner of the building.
6. Alterations and additions: The one-story brick ell was added to the southeast corner of the building during ownership by the Kearns family, and is shown on Sanborn's 1915 insurance map of Manchester. Its construction probably followed soon after the Kearns' 1903 purchase of land adjoining the original site. (Deed, Volume 617, pages 483 and 538). It is not known if the balconies and fire escapes on the rear (south) elevations are original. The original first-story restaurant and storefronts were concealed behind the present stuccoed and false half-timbered treatment on the front (north) elevation; this was installed by 1977, when the Salty Dog Tavern occupied both first-story commercial spaces. (1977 Manchester city directory)

B. Historical Context:

The first owners of the Kearns Block were Patrick Kearns and his wife Ellen, whose rising prosperity in the late nineteenth century paralleled that of Manchester and echoed the Irish-American success story. Manchester directories show that by 1877, Patrick Kearns occupied the frame house (shown in Hurd's 1892 Atlas) on the site of the present building.

Manchester's development into New Hampshire's largest city was the result of the growth of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company textile mills which began in the 1830s, exploiting the power of the Merrimack River at Amoskeag Falls. The first bridge over the Merrimack River was erected on Bridge Street in 1792, three blocks west of the intersection with Elm Street. Elm Street developed as the city's principal commercial thoroughfare beginning in the 1830s.

Kearns and his wife purchased the site with a wood frame building in 1879. In 1883, Kearns began operating a saloon on the premises and by 1893 had moved to a house on residential Maple Street.

In 1895, according to the Manchester Daily Mirror (September 16 and October 2), the neighborhood was known as the city's "Barbary Coast" district because of its concentration of saloons. Patrick Kearns was reported to be one of nine area saloon keepers about to close their bars because of repeated raids by the police for liquor law violations, instigated by the Law and Order League of Manchester. Kearns did close his saloon, but only long enough for his new four-story block with Romanesque Revival detailing to be built late in 1895 by contractor James H. Mendell. It was the first brick building on the south side of Bridge Street in the first two blocks east of Elm. Kearns opened a restaurant in the new building. (It was also listed as a saloon in the city directory.) The Law and Order League appears to have prevailed, however, no saloon was listed in the city directory on Bridge Street from 1898-1900, but Kearns opened a bar elsewhere, at 413 Main Street, in 1900.

The use of the Kearns Block from 1898-1915 is unknown. The reverse directories begun in 1916 show the six apartments of the upper three stories occupied by French-Canadians, many of them mill workers. The first-story commercial space at the west end of the building was Pierre Levasseur's restaurant. (This space was used continuously as a restaurant through 1973.) At the east end was Joseph Bienvenue's "Liquors."

The Kearns family owned the block until 1945. By the time of Patrick Kearns' death in 1915, he had built a summer house at Hampton Beach, New Hampshire, and in 1914 had donated an altar in memory of his wife in the new St. Patrick's Church at the seaside resort. (Manchester Union, August 4, 1914) The Kearns' sons also prospered. City directories show that Francis was treasurer of Manchester's True Jones Brewing Company until Prohibition and then became treasurer of the Brodie Electric Company. Thomas became a New York City doctor. (Probate docket #51717, January, 1937.)

With the advent of Prohibition, the first-story commercial space at the east end of the Kearns Block remained vacant until the early 1920s, when Stanislaw Kazierski, one of the increasing number of eastern Europeans in the vicinity of the Block, opened a grocery store, a use that continued through the early 1950s when it became occupied by a furnace supply company. The hard times of the Depression of the 1930s were exacerbated in Manchester by the departure of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company in 1936. After this time, the six apartments in the Kearns Block remained partially vacant and many of the residents listed no occupation in city directories. (A Works Progress Administration Relief Store was located in the next city block east of the Kearns Block in the early 1940s.) In the 1940s, the Ferretti family of Manchester began assembling parcels of real estate along Bridge and Elm Streets, including the Kearns Block. In 1973 they opened the Salty Dog Tavern in the eastern commercial space of the building, extending the tavern into the west end by the late 1970s, and removing the stairway to the upper stories of the building by c. 1980.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The red brick and gray New Hampshire granite building materials of the flat-roofed, four-story Kearns Block were those traditionally used for the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company's mills and corporation housing. The vernacular Romanesque Revival detailing of the principal entrance on the facade and of the upper story windows (north and east elevations) reflected contemporary fashion, while the inconsistent use of a bracketed cornice on the north and east elevations and the Palladian motif embodied in the stairhall window on the facade suggested that an architect was not employed to design the structure. Late twentieth-century alterations concealed the original character of the storefront design, except for the main entrance, which retained its original appearance.

2. Condition of fabric: Good condition prior to demolition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Rectangular plan; 55' by 48'. The main block of the building was nine bays by two bays deep; the west wall of the rear ell of the building extended about 15' to the south of the main block. The addition at the southeast corner of the building was one story high and three bays deep. The building had a full basement.
2. Foundations: Split granite (gray).
3. Walls: Red pressed brick laid in common bond, with quarry-faced gray granite employed for the Romanesque arch at the main entrance and for a second story sill course on the north and east elevations. Sills were granite throughout. Ornamental pressed brick hood molds were employed above the round-arched windows at the fourth story on the north and east elevations. A brick belt course at sill level on the fourth story and simple, three-step corbelling surmounted by a plain frieze, further enriched the two principal elevations.
4. Structural system, framing: The internal framing system was dimension-sawn wood; walls were load-bearing brick masonry.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: Small balconies projected at the rear (south) elevations of the main block and west ell on the three upper stories. On the main block these formed part of the fire escape system. Bearing posts were steel pipe; floors and simple balustrades were wood. Stairs were steel.
6. Chimneys: The brick stacks of three rectangular wall chimneys (two in the main block, one in the ell) projected above the roofline and were parged.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The principal entrance on the front facade, located off-center in the fourth bay east of the west end of the building, retained its original ornamental surround of a quarry-faced, gray granite. The Romanesque-style arch consisted of strongly defined voussoirs above paired, engaged granite colonettes. The recessed wood paneled entrance door with single-light glazing was flanked by side lights with paneled aprons and one-light-over one glazing. The tympanum above the door was filled with wood paneling. The two other entrance doors on the facade were altered and part of the stuccoed, false half-timbered veneer applied in the mid-1970s. On the east wall of the main block and one-story addition there were two doors with segmental arched openings and transom lights.

- b. Windows and shutters: The facade contained five rectangular 1970s windows within the remodeled first story. On the north and east elevations, the second- and third-story window openings were composed of segmental arches with triple courses of brick headers. (Double courses were employed for the openings on all other elevations except for the south wall of the rear ell where flat granite lintels were used.) At the north elevation, the stair hall above the main entrance to the apartments was expressed on the exterior by variations in window opening height, including a tripartite Palladian-style window between the second and third stories. The stair hall window was round-arched, as were fourth-story windows on the east elevation. Original double-hung wood sash remained intact. The original second-, third- and fourth-story glazing was two-lights-over-one on the principal facade. On the first story of the east wall of the main block were two high-set saloon windows with original art glass.

Second-story glazing was two-lights-over-one, with four-lights-over-one employed in the two upper stories. Glazing on the other elevations was either two- or four-lights-over one. There were no shutters.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Flat; covered by asphalt roll-roofing.
- b. Cornice, eaves: A wood cornice was employed on all elevations; on the north and east elevations there existed small-scale brackets.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: See page 8
- b. First through fourth floors: See page 9

2. Stairways: The central stairway between the first and second floors was removed entirely in the late 1970s to accommodate expansion of the Salty Dog Tavern into the west, first-story space. Upper-story staircases were wooden, with turned newel posts, balusters and railings.

3. Flooring: Yellow pine. Standing and painted finishes.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster on sawn lath; some rooms wall-papered. Colors varied.



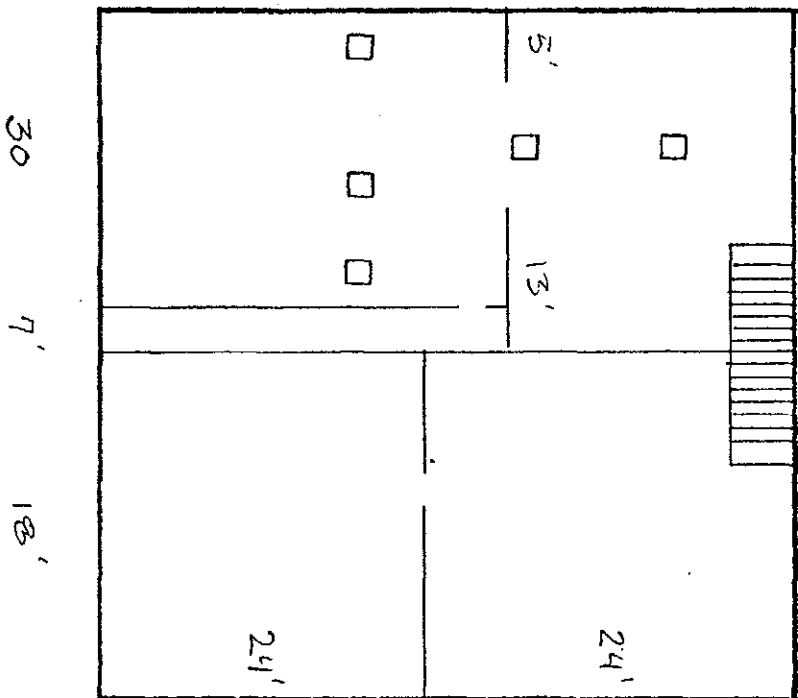
SALTY DOG TAVERN  
15-17 BRIDGE ST MANCHESTER, NH

(Page 8)

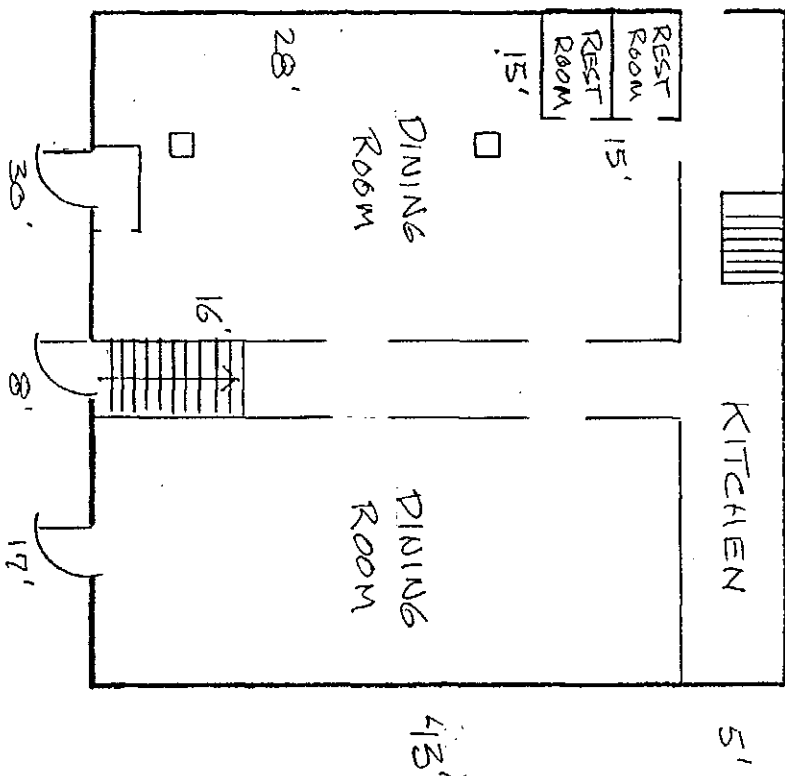
KEARNS BLOCK  
HABS No. NH-200



## BASEMENT



## FIRST FLOOR



BRIDGE ST

BRIDGE ST

SOURCE: STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS AND LIGHTING INFLUENCES SURVEY  
MANCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY, MANCHESTER, NH 1983

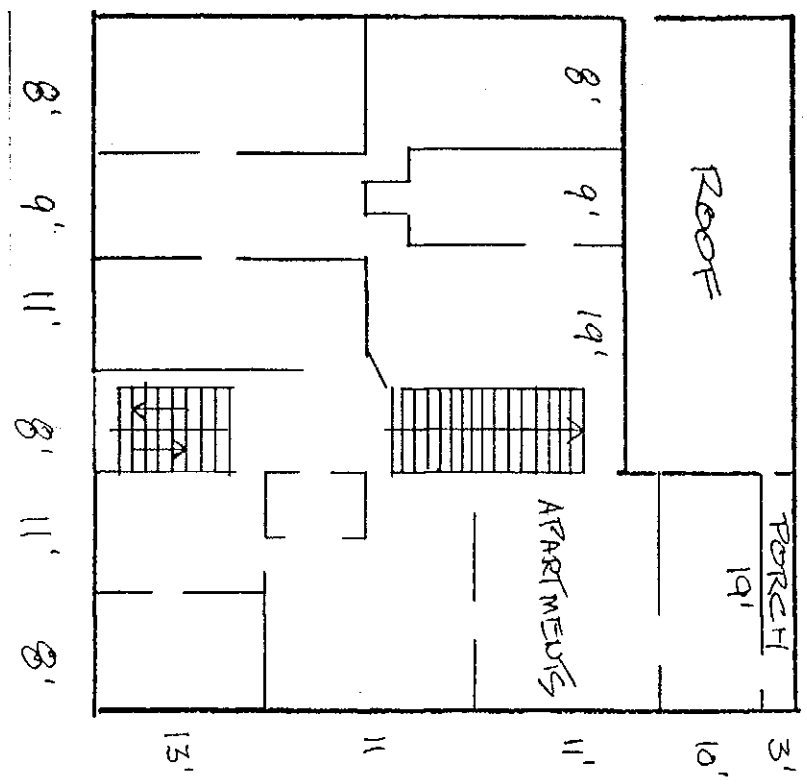
SALTY DOG TAVERN  
15-17 BRIDGE ST MANCHESTER, NH

MAY, 1985

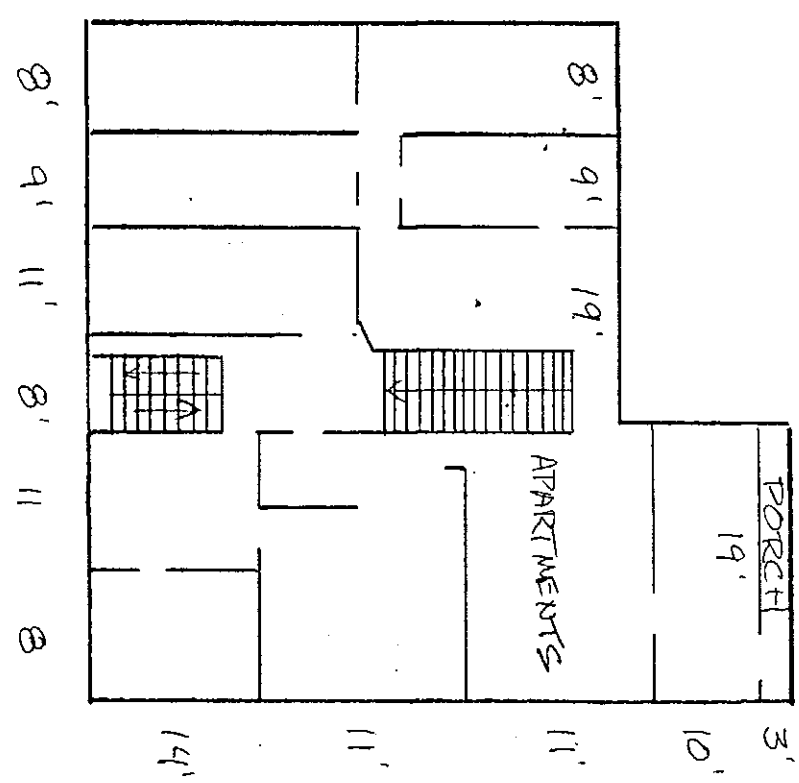
KEARNS BLOCK  
HABS No. NH-200



SECOND FLOOR



THIRD & FOURTH FLOOR



BRIDGE ST

BRIDGE ST

SOURCE: STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS AND LIGHTING INFLUENCES SURVEY  
MANCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY, MANCHESTER, NH 1983

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Doorways were trimmed with yellow pine bolection moldings and corner blocks. Principal apartment entries contained two-light transoms over the doors. Hard pine doors were paneled.
  - b. Windows: Window trim was identical to door trim.
6. Decorative features and trim: See 5, above. A simple yellow pine baseboard circumscribed principal rooms.
7. Hardware: Door hardware consisted of brass hinges, iron striker plates and box locks, and brass knobs of common, undistinguished design.
8. Mechanical equipment:
- a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: Oil-fired furnace; two-pipe steam system.
  - b. Lighting: Building fully electrified; no fixtures of interest.
  - c. One full bathroom per apartment; men's/women's restrooms in southeast corner of Salty Dog Tavern, first floor.
9. Original furnishings: none known

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The facade of the Kearns Block is oriented north; the building is aligned along the right-of-way of Bridge Street, which runs east-west. The street slopes slightly downhill to the west, and after crossing Elm Street c. 40' west of the building, descends more precipitously down to the Merrimack River and the Notre Dame Bridge. The immediate built environment setting consists of late nineteenth-century, three- and four-story, brick commercial blocks. There is no vegetation on or about the site; a vast, asphalted parking lot existed east of the structure, part of which is now being developed for the Washington Street project.
2. Historic landscape design: The original setting was the standard urban sheet grid. No photographic record exists of trees or street furniture.
3. Outbuildings: None.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings: None located.

B. Early Views: None located.

C. Interviews: None conducted.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deeds and probate records, Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds and Registry of Probate, 19 Temple Street, Nashua, New Hampshire.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Board of Trade Journal (Manchester, N.H.), Vol. 5, No. 4 (January 1896), p. 19.

Daily Mirror (Manchester, N.H.), September 16 and October 2, 1895.

Flynn, Thomas, Atlas of the City of Manchester, New Hampshire, Philadelphia: D. L. Miller & Co., 1896, plate 5.

Hurd, O. H., Town and City Atlas of the State of New Hampshire, Boston: O. H. Hurd & Co., 1892, p. 77.

Insurance Maps of Manchester, New Hampshire, New York: Sanborn Map Co. 1915 and 1943 editions consulted.

Manchester (N.H.) Directory. Publisher and place of publication varies. Consulted for various years from 1875 through 1981.

The Union (Manchester, N.H.), August 4, 1914.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: None known.

F. Supplemental Material: None known.

### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Kearns Block was demolished in June, 1985, as part of site clearance for a large-scale office redevelopment entitled the Washington Street Project. The project boundaries are shown on page 13 with the site of the Kearns Block denoted. The project is sponsored by the Manchester Housing Authority, the City of Manchester, and the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

This record was prepared in May and June, 1985.

Federal agency:

Federal Highway Administration  
Region 1, N. H. Division Office  
Federal Building  
55 Pleasant Street, Room 219  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

with

New Hampshire Department of Public Works and Highways  
Environmental Services Section  
Special Services Division  
John O. Morton Building - Room 109  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Project name:

Manchester, NH  
Notre Dame Bridge

FHWA project number: M-5285(001)  
NHDPWH project number: C-2330

Prepared by:

Closs Planning Consultants  
Four Bicentennial Square  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Principal consultant: Christopher W. Closs, MNRP  
Research subcontractor: Jane M. Porter

Date:

June 14, 1985

# BRIDGE STREET

KEARNS BLOCK  
HABS No. NH-200

(Page 13)

BK 3213 PG 0573

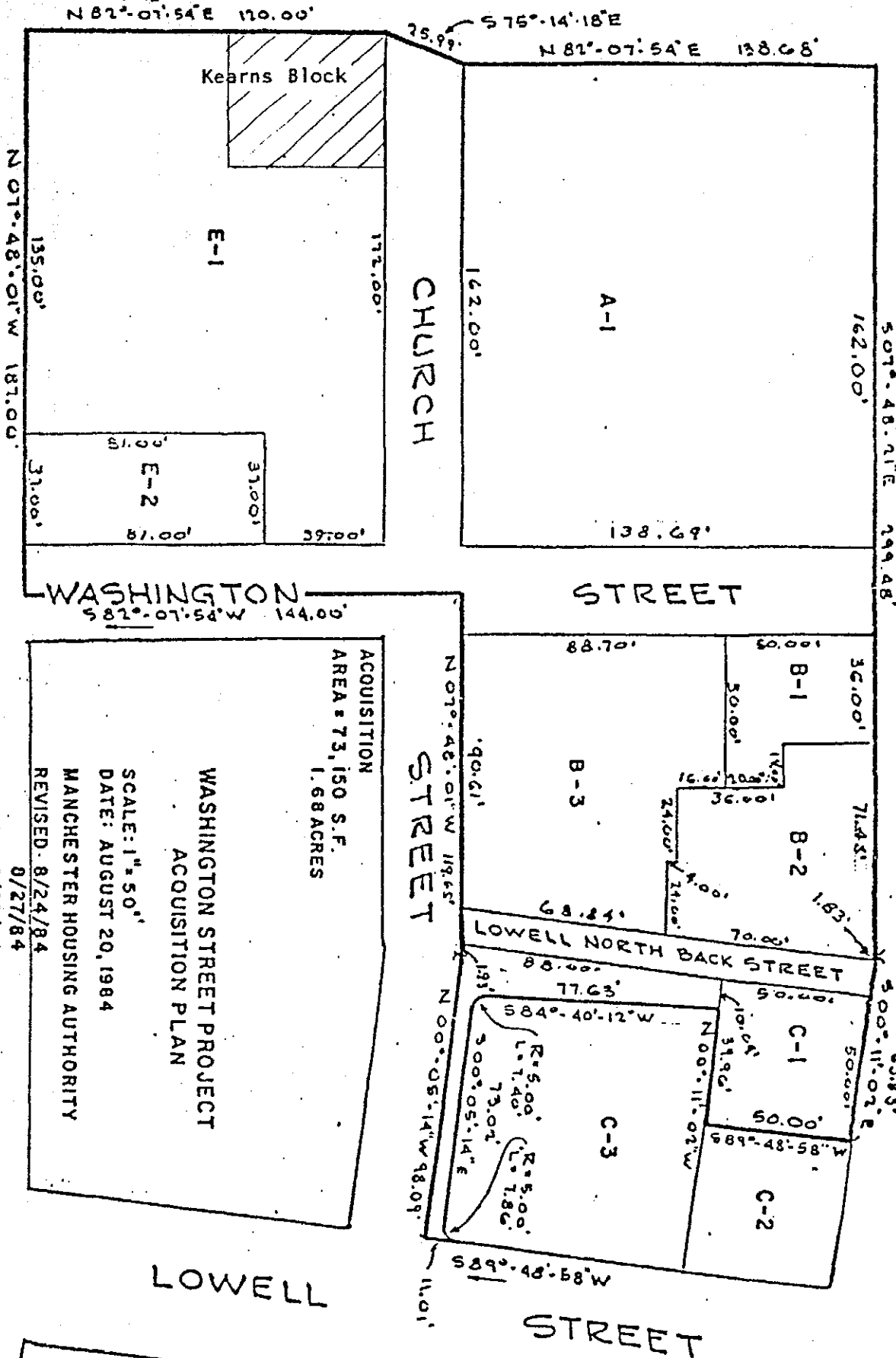
## ACQUISITION PLAN

KOSCIUSZKO

STREET



EXHIBIT "B"



ELM

STREET

LOWELL

STREET